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A method and apparatus is disclosed for generating and distributing multilingual documents. The multilingual documents are comprised of primary information consisting of human-readable text and secondary information consisting of machine-readable data such that a translation of the text is accomplished by converting the human-readable text into a second language through the use of the decoded machine-readable data. The machine-readable data is comprised of a code that describes a set of editing operations that can be applied to the human-readable text to convert it into at least a second language. In a preferred embodiment, the machine-readable data is embedded in the image using an unobtrusive code on the document such as Xerox DATAGLYPH codes.